

Message Text

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TO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 176725

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 23472 ACTION SECSTATE INFO PHNOM PENH
SAIGON SEPT 5

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 23472

EXDIS

E.O. GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB, CH, FR.

SUBJECT: SONN SAN'S POSSIBLE VIEW OF PRC ROLE IN CAMBODIAN
SETTLEMENT.

REF: PHNOM PENH 7788

DEPT PASS USLO PEKING

1. SONN SAN AT HIS INITIATIVE SAW EMBOFF SEPT 4. HE WAS VISIBLY
DISTRESSED AT WHAT HE CONSIDERED A FURTHER DETERIORATION
IN KHMER MORALE. HE CONTINUED TO CONSIDER THAT LON
NOL HAD TO LEAVE CAMBODIA BEFORE THERE COULD BE
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IMPROVEMENT IN THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION (AND HENCE
IN THE MILITARY SITUATION), PROGRESS ON THE POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC SCENE AND BETTER PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTIA-
TIONS WITH THE OTHER SIDE.

2. SONN SAN SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE FRENCH, PARTICULARLY QUAI OFFICIALS, THAT POMPIDOU'S TRIP TO PEKING PROVIDED THE FRENCH WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THE VIEW THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE CAMBODIAN PROBLEM NOW WOULD SERVE PRC INTERESTS IN THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY PROVIDE A ROLE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, FOR SIHANOUK, AND WOULD ALSO PERMIT NATIONALISTS (INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN THE KHMER COMMUNIST MOVEMENT) TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP IN CAMBODIA. CONTINUATION OF THE WAR WOULD RESULT IN INCREASING DRV CONTROL OVER CAMBODIA AS A WHOLE AND COMPLETE DRV DOMINATION OF CERTAIN BORDER AREAS, AN EXCLUSIVE ROLE WHICH WOULD NOT BE IN CHINA'S INTEREST. SONN SAN SAID ALSO THAT DR. KISSINGER'S VISIT TO PEKING WOULD SIMILARLY PROVIDE AN OCCASION TO ATTEMPT TO ENLIST PRC SUPPORT FOR A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT IN CAMBODIA. SONN SAN THOUGHT THAT IN LIGHT OF THE SERIOUS WARNING OF RENEWED COMMUNIST MILITARY EFFORTS IN THE COMING DRY SEASON, ONLY A FEW MONTHS WERE LEFT TO TRY TO TURN THE SITUATION IN THE DIRECTION OF NEGOTIATIONS AND A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

3. I WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS SOONEST CONCERNING LINE I SHOULD TAKE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT WHEN I MEET HIM SEPTEMBER 7, SHOULD HE ASK OUR VIEW OF THE PRC ROLE IN ARRIVING AT A SETTLEMENT FOR CAMBODIA. GDS
IRWIN UNQUOTE

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